

# Disparity

by marc macdonald

It was a bright morning, the kind that tended to lift spirits and dampen melancholic feelings. I sat at a small table made of polished black metal in a chair made of wicker, with a casually tattered cotton cushion that was beige with stripes of violet, sage, and forest green, each of a different thickness than the others, and though I took note of the divergence between the two pieces of furniture, I cared little. I was comfortable, and the coffee was warm, and the sun was shining on me.

I was reading a book by Faulkner, a tale of grotesque Southerners that was told by more than one narrator, yet what struck me most prominently about the novel was that none of the stories within felt cohesive or understandable. Each was baffling and left my mind reeling, searching for a base from which to piece together the narrative as a whole. But as a whole, the stories felt like life. There were pieces and tidbits and mentionings of events that were lived but not told, and there were other pieces of happenings that had never taken place, not even within the strange alternate world of the book, which was actually just the author's mind, that were hashed out in depth and given to the reader. It was this sudden awareness, that life was realistic both when lived and when imagined, that caused me to lay the book down and take a long look about me.

I noticed the table and chair again, and looked for other possible discrepancies between what I expected and what was. I found that the waitress was young, petite, beautiful. Her teeth were large and white and her smile showed a dimple in her right cheek that was absent from her left. And her name was Talia, which struck me suddenly as odd. I saw that the cup that held my coffee was off white and that this had the effect of making it seem dirtier than it truly may have been. I saw that my hands were shaking miserably though my body felt at ease. My eyes began to water and my throat felt suddenly scratchy.

These were strange realizations, and each built upon the one before until I was completely mystified and unsettled in my life.

I picked up the coffee cup, took a tentative gulp. It was abruptly and surprisingly cold.

